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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/662,938	09/16/2003	Hideyuki Hashimoto	325772033200	2034
25227 7590 10/17/2007 MORRISON & FOERSTER LLP 1650 TYSONS BOULEVARD SUITE 400 MCLEAN, VA 22102			EXAMINER DHINGRA, PAWANDEEP	
			ART UNIT 2625	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 10/17/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/662,938

Applicant(s)

HASHIMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Pawandeep S. Dhingra

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 September 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 9-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-8 and 20-22 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 9-14 and 16-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/16/2003.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

- This action is responsive to the following communication: a Response to Restriction Requirement filed on 09/04/2007.
- Claims 9-21 are elected in the present application in response to the election requirement made without traverse by the applicant.
- Claims 1-8, and 22 have been cancelled by the applicant.
- Only claims 9-19 are being examined on the merits in this action. Claims 20-21 have been cancelled by the examiner (see examiner's amendment below).

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 20-21 are cancelled.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Atty. Barry E. Bretschneider and his assistant Ms. Debra around September 28, 2007.

Examiner Notes

Examiner cites particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that, in preparing responses, the applicant fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 9, and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al., US 6,388,759 in view of Fukuda et al, JP 2002-023564.

Re claim 9, Yoshida et al. discloses an image processing apparatus (see figure 1) that receives inputs through a plurality of input apparatuses (i.e. touch panel 111, keypad 112, see figure 2) (see column 9, lines 34-45), comprising: a setter (i.e. operation input unit, OP, see figure 2) that sets an operation of the processing apparatus in accordance with an input entered through an input operation performed on

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an input apparatus (i.e. keypad entry) among the plurality of input apparatuses (see column 9, lines 17-58; figure 2); Yoshida further discloses setting different automatic clear times based on plurality of input conditions performed by the user via a plurality of input apparatuses (see column 13, line 44-column 14, line 48).

Yoshida fails to explicitly disclose a controller that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed, wherein a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses, and if another input operation is not performed on the input apparatus during the determined automatic-clear time, executes an automatic-clear function to clear the set operation to an initially set default.

However, Fukuda et al. teaches image processing apparatus (copy machine, see paragraph 1) that receives inputs through a plurality of input apparatuses (see paragraph 11-12), and a controller (control means or auto clear time decision means) that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed (see paragraphs 5-28, note that different auto clearing times are stored in tables 1-2 according to diverse setting operating modes desired by the user corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses), wherein a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses (see paragraphs 5-28, note that different auto clearing times are stored in tables 1-2 according to diverse setting operating modes desired by the user corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses), and if another input operation is not performed on the input apparatus during the determined automatic-clear time, executes an automatic-clear function to

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clear the set operation to an initially set default (see paragraphs 5-28, specifically paragraph 5).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the increased user-friendly automatic clearing time means as taught by Fukuda et al. for the benefit of giving the user increased flexibility and convenience to set favorite automatic clear times as taught by Fukuda in abstract.

Re claim 13, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose a table storing data of automatic-clear times respectively corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses, wherein the controller reads data of an automatic-clear time corresponding to the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed, and determines the automatic-clear time of the read data as the automatic-clear time for the input apparatus.

However, Fukuda et al. discloses a table (see tables 1-2) storing data of automatic-clear times (see table 1-2) respectively corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses (touch panel, key pad, see paragraphs 11-12) (see abstract; paragraphs 17-28, note that different auto clearing times are stored in tables 1-2 according to diverse setting operating modes desired by the user corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses), wherein the controller (control means) reads data of an automatic-clear time corresponding to the input apparatus (setting operating mode chose by user relating or the input apparatus) on which the input operation was performed, and

determines the automatic-clear time of the read data as the automatic-clear time for the input apparatus (see paragraphs 5, 11-28).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the increased user-friendly automatic clearing time means as taught by Fukuda et al. for the benefit of giving the user increased flexibility and convenience to set favorite automatic clear times as taught by Fukuda in abstract.

Re claim 14, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose wherein the data stored in the table can be rewritten.

However, Fukuda et al. discloses wherein the data stored in the table can be rewritten (see abstract; paragraph 17-19, note that the user can chose their favorite auto clear times depending upon the needs and the present setting data containing the auto clear times is written into RAM, hence it is apparent that the user can change/set (rewrite) a suitable data into RAM according to his/her needs).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the increased user-friendly automatic clearing time means as taught by Fukuda et al. for the benefit of giving the user increased flexibility and convenience to set favorite automatic clear times as taught by Fukuda in abstract.

3. Claims 9-12, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al., US 6,388,759 in view of Hirota et al., US 5,546,166.

Re claim 9, Yoshida et al. discloses an image processing apparatus (see figure 1) that receives inputs through a plurality of input apparatuses (i.e. touch panel 111, keypad 112, see figure 2) (see column 9, lines 34-45), comprising: a setter (i.e. operation input unit, OP, see figure 2) that sets an operation of the processing apparatus in accordance with an input entered through an input operation performed on an input apparatus (i.e. keypad entry) among the plurality of input apparatuses (see column 9, lines 17-58; figure 2); Yoshida further discloses setting different automatic clear times based on plurality of input conditions performed by the user via a plurality of input apparatuses (see column 13, line 44-column 14, line 48).

Yoshida fails to explicitly disclose a controller that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed, wherein a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses, and if another input operation is not performed on the input apparatus during the determined automatic-clear time, executes an automatic-clear function to clear the set operation to an initially set default.

However, Hirota teaches an image processing apparatus (see abstract) that receives inputs through a plurality of input apparatuses (see figures 1-2), and a controller (i.e. CPU) that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus (see figure 1) on which the input operation was performed, wherein a different

automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses (i.e. cursor key 25, ten-key pad, etc., see figure 1) (see abstract; column 3, line 35-column 5, line 65, note that the auto clear process subroutine determines the auto clear time for inputs entered by the input apparatus. It also checks whether the guidance mode has been selected by the user or not, if yes, then the different auto clear time (auto clear timer T1 or T2) is determined (set) for each of the plurality of inputs entered by the plurality of input apparatuses. On the other hand, if guidance mode is not selected than a different auto clear time (auto clear timer T0) is determined or each of the plurality of inputs entered by the plurality of input apparatuses), and if another input operation is not performed on the input apparatus during the determined automatic-clear time (timers T0-T2), executes an automatic-clear function to clear the set operation to an initially set default (standard conditions) (see column 1, lines 44-67; abstract; column 5, lines 20-59, note that once timers T0-T2 have finished, a warning is given to a user. And if no input key is depressed by the user during this warning timer (apparent), the process executes the auto clear function and sets the copy conditions back to standard conditions).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the auto clear functionality as taught by Hirota et al. for the benefit of providing *"an image forming apparatus capable of alerting an operator of the timing for the operation of the auto-clear function which automatically returns the copy conditions to the standard copy conditions after completion of a copy operation, or within a*

predetermined time period following any key operation” as taught by Hirota at column 2, lines 5-16.

Re claim 10, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose a receiver that receives an extension request entered by a user to extend the determined automatic-clear time, wherein the controller extends the determined automatic-clear time after the receiver receives the extension request.

However, Hirota teaches a receiver (see figure 1) that receives an extension request (depression of guidance key 2) entered by a user to extend the determined automatic-clear time (longer auto clear time) (see column 4, line 34-column 5, line 65), wherein the controller (CPU, which controls the auto clear subroutine) extends the determined automatic-clear time (sets the longer auto clear time, timer T2) after the receiver receives the extension request (see column 4, line 34-column 5, line 65).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the auto clear functionality as taught by Hirota et al. for the benefit of providing *“an image forming apparatus capable of alerting an operator of the timing for the operation of the auto-clear function which automatically returns the copy conditions to the standard copy conditions after completion of a copy operation, or within a predetermined time period following any key operation” as taught by Hirota at column 2, lines 5-16.*

Re claim 11, Yoshida et al. discloses an identifying unit (Operational Panel, OP) that identifies the input apparatus (see figure 2) on which the input operation was performed (depression of a particular key on the key pad, fig. 2), wherein the controller (CPU) identifies (recognizes) the input apparatus (particular key selection) from a result of the identification (whether the copy mode or facsimile mode is selected) by the identifying unit (see column 9, line 17-column 12, line 58).

Re claim 12, Yoshida et al. further discloses wherein the input apparatus (see figure 2) transmits, to the identifying unit (OP), identification information that identifies the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed (see column 9, lines 17-56, note that the OP recognizes (identifies) the identification information (copy or fax mode selection) that identifies the input apparatus (the key pad, fig. 2) on which the input operation was performed (whether the copy or fax mode was selected via performing operations on the key pad), and the identifying unit (OP) identifies (recognizes) the input apparatus based on the identification information (detection information regarding selection of copy or fax mode) transmitted from the input apparatus (operations performed on the key pad, fig. 2) (see column 9, line 17-column 10, line 57).

Re claim 16, Yoshida et al. further discloses wherein the controller (CPU) determines an automatic-clear time (auto-clearing operating time) for an object input apparatus (ADF) in a manner where the longer an interval between input operations in the object input apparatus is expected to be (manual placement of the originals in ADF),

the longer the automatic-clear time determined for the object input apparatus is (T2 is longer than the T1) (see column 13, line 60-column 14, line 48).

(Note that Hirota also discloses the controller (CPU) determines an automatic-clear time for an object input apparatus in a manner where the longer an interval between input operations in the object input apparatus is expected to be (if the user needs longer time to read and understand the methods for setting the copy functions in between input operations, see column 1, lines 30-67), the longer the automatic-clear time determined for the object input apparatus is (Timer T2) (column 3, line 35-column 5, line 65, note that Timer T2 is assigned, which is longer than normal auto clear time is assigned by the controller upon the request of the user).

4. Claims 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al., US 6,388,759 in view of Hirota et al., US 5,546,166 further in view of well-known art.

Re claim 17, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose wherein at least one of the plurality of input apparatuses is connected to the image processing apparatus via a network.

However, Official Notice is taken to note that ability to have least one of the plurality of input apparatuses (i.e. keyboard) is connected to the image processing apparatus (i.e. copying machine) via a PC on the network is notoriously well known and commonly used in the art. It would have been obvious to have a keyboard connected to a PC, which is connected to the image processing apparatus of Yoshida for the benefit

of enabling the user to provide further interactive input, and for increased user flexibility and options.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the auto clear functionality as taught by Hirota et al. for the benefit of providing *"an image forming apparatus capable of alerting an operator of the timing for the operation of the auto-clear function which automatically returns the copy conditions to the standard copy conditions after completion of a copy operation, or within a predetermined time period following any key operation"* as taught by Hirota at column 2, lines 5-16.

Re claim 18, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose at least one of the plurality of input apparatuses is connected to a terminal apparatus that is connected to the image processing apparatus via a network.

However, Official Notice is taken to note that ability to have least one of the plurality of input apparatuses (i.e. keyboard) is connected to a terminal apparatus (i.e. PC) that is connected to the image processing apparatus (i.e. copying machine) via a network is notoriously well known and commonly used in the art. It would have been obvious to have a keyboard connected to a PC, which is connected to the image processing apparatus of Yoshida for the benefit of enabling the user to provide further interactive input, and for increased user flexibility and options.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to include the auto clear functionality as taught by Hirota et al. for the benefit of providing *"an image forming apparatus capable of alerting an operator of the timing for the operation of the auto-clear function which automatically returns the copy conditions to the standard copy conditions after completion of a copy operation, or within a predetermined time period following any key operation"* as taught by Hirota at column 2, lines 5-16.

Re claim 19, Yoshida et al. fails to further disclose after executing the automatic-clear function, the controller notifies the terminal apparatus of a fact that the controller has executed the automatic-clear function.

However, Official Notice is taken to note that ability to have the image processing apparatus (copying machine or printer) notifying the PC with an updated status corresponding to an operation performed by it that whether the printing has finished successfully or if an error has occurred (i.e. paper jam, out of paper) is notoriously well known and commonly used in the art. It would have been obvious to have image processing apparatus of Yoshida to notify the PC of its current status after performing an operation like auto-clear for the benefit of providing the user with increased flexibility, options, convenience, and efficient status updating system.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the image forming apparatus as disclosed by Yoshida to

include the auto clear functionality as taught by Hirota et al. for the benefit of providing *“an image forming apparatus capable of alerting an operator of the timing for the operation of the auto-clear function which automatically returns the copy conditions to the standard copy conditions after completion of a copy operation, or within a predetermined time period following any key operation”* as taught by Hirota at column 2, lines 5-16.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 15 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The prior art of record (Hirota) teaches allocating a longer auto clear time for complex operations (non universal design compliant) associated with the input apparatuses but does not disclose, teach, or suggest the claimed inventions of (in combination with all other limitations in the claims), the controller determines a longer automatic-clear time for an input apparatus that is universal-design-compliant than for an input apparatus that is not universal-design-compliant as set forth in claim 15.

Contact Information


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Pawandeep S. Dhingra whose telephone number is 571-270-1231. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 9:30-7:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Twyler Lamb can be reached on 571-272-7406. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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October 10, 2007


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